for storing farm produce, processed farm produce, agricultural inputs, etc., and prevention of distress sale by creating the facility of pledge loan and marketing credit. The Ministry is also implementing a Central Sector Scheme for 'Development/Strengthening of Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure, Grading and Standardisation'. The Bharat Nirman Programme which is under implementation is also focused on infrastructure development in rural area.

Controlling wheat prices in Karnataka

2432. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that wheat production has considerably reduced in the last few years in Karnataka; and

(b) if so, the steps, so far, taken by Government to control hike in wheat prices in the State due to short production of wheat there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Karnataka is not a major producer of wheat. The production of wheat in Karnataka fluctuated from 1.11 lakhs tonnes to 1.68 lakh tonnes during 2002-03 to 2005-06 as shown in the table below:

Production of wheat in Karnataka

(In lakh tonnes)

Year	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Production	1.48	1.11	1.68*	1.48$

* 4th advance estimates
$ 2nd advance estimates for 2005-06

(b) In February 2006, the Central Government has allowed import of 5 lakh tonnes of wheat. The import of wheat has been resorted to for stabilizing the open market prices of wheat and to enhance food security in the southern States including Karnataka.